



Memorandum

#12-033

TO: WIC Regional Directors
WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Linda Brumble, Unit Manager
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
Nutrition Services Section

DATE: March 29, 2012

SUBJECT: Peer Counselors and the Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference

The annual WIC Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference is approaching very quickly. Peer Counselor sessions will be a big part of the conference this year. Here are some things that you need to know.

Will Peer Counselors benefit from the NBF Conference?

Absolutely! Although funding is a little tighter this year, we would still like to encourage you to bring your Peer Counselors. This year there are two sessions specific to Peer Counselors in which Peer Counselors can acquire knowledge and ideas to improve their breastfeeding promotion and support services.

- *Ideas for Your Peer Counselor Program from Other Local Agencies*
- *Evaluating Your Peer Counselor Program*

In addition to these sessions there will be a pre-conference session for Peer Counselor trainers.

Who needs to attend the Peer Counselor Train-the-Trainer pre-conference session?

This session is a train-the-trainer course for the new Loving Support peer counseling training:

- *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together*

For WIC Managers

For Training Peer Counselors

This session will prepare attendees to use the new curriculum to train peer counselors at their agency. Due to limited space, registration for this session is limited to one staff member per local agency. The staff person who will be leading local agency peer counselor trainings should attend. Most often this will be the Breastfeeding Coordinator, the Peer Counselor or Training Coordinator, or the Primary Peer Counselor Trainer. Successful completion of the *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together* train-the-trainer course is required before local agencies can begin using the new curriculum.

Note: If you attended the July 2011 pilot of this training, you will still need to attend the train-the-trainer course as this training will introduce aspects that are specific to Texas.

The new Loving Support Peer Counselor training will be replacing the current Texas WIC Peer Counselor training. Two additional *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together* train-the-trainer courses will be offered in Austin in the fall of 2012. All local agencies should send their designated peer counselor trainer through this training by the end of calendar year 2012.

Do you have Peer Counselors that have become International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC)?

We would like to offer this special group of women and men the opportunity to expand their practice based on their certification and experience. Agencies will have the choice of training new Peer Counselors with a staff member who has been through the *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together* train-the-trainer course or they may contract with a Peer Counselor IBCLC from another agency. The state will keep a list of qualified trainers. In order to be a contract Peer Counselor Trainer the trainer must:

- Be a Peer Counselor and an IBCLC.
- Attend the *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together* train-the-trainer course.
- Have permission from their director.
- Be willing to travel and spend several days away from home when conducting the training.
- Conduct pilot trainings with the state Peer Counselor Coordinator and receive approval as a trainer.

Anyone who is interested in this program should send an e-mail to Kristina.Arrieta@dshs.state.tx.us. Space is limited.

For additional questions about the peer counselor sessions being offered at the NBF Conference or any questions about the opportunity to train peer counselors for other local agencies, please contact Kristina Arrieta, Peer Counselor Coordinator, Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit, at (512) 341-4593 or Kristina.Arrieta@dshs.state.tx.us.